

## **A Love Story in Seven Songs: Chapter 1: Rebel Rebel by MadameAshley**

**Category:** Stranger Things, 2016

**Genre:** Hurt-Comfort, Romance

**Language:** English

**Status:** In-Progress

**Published:** 2016-10-03 17:29:50

**Updated:** 2016-10-03 17:29:50

**Packaged:** 2019-12-17 14:39:51

**Rating:** K

**Chapters:** 1

**Words:** 1,107

**Publisher:** [www.fanfiction.net](http://www.fanfiction.net)

**Summary:** A slow-burning Joyce - Hopper fanfic. Told from alternating perspectives.

## **A Love Story in Seven Songs: Chapter 1: Rebel Rebel**

A week rarely passes where Hopper doesn't find himself on the Byers' doorstep for some reason or another. He has made his share of explanations for these unannounced visits, and once he has run out of explanations, he makes excuses instead. His motives start out viable enough: "I thought Jonathan could use some help repairing that hole in the front wall" or "Flo and the boys at the station put together some comics for Will to read until he's good to come home." Gratefully, Joyce never suggests that Hopper visit her son in the hospital - something he'd prefer not to do for reasons he'd prefer not to discuss.

Once Will is back in Joyce's care, Hopper continues to check in at regular intervals, whether on or off-duty. He tells himself that he would do this for any family who had experienced what Joyce and her kids had been through. He's just being a good cop, just being a good man, although he has moments where he sincerely doubts that he is either of these things. Occasionally, Jim tries to convince himself that he comes by to offer Joyce protection, but he readily acknowledges the absurdity of this idea. Here is a woman in possession of an axe-wielding determination to defend her own truth – even alone and under immense emotional pressure. Ms. Byers is clearly not in need of anyone else's fortification. Hopper feels protective anyway.

It is Christmas Eve. He's made his requisite appearance at the station house party, followed by an equally necessary gesture of penance in the woods. He has never been a religious man, but neither is he a stranger to guilt. After pausing briefly at the site of his offering, Hopper wanders back to the road. The time of year weighs on him as he turns the key in the ignition, and contemplates the long evening ahead. He considers the ounces of whiskey it will take to erase the traces of another winter's night spent nodding off in a small room thrumming with machines, his little girl continuing her slow, inevitable fade.

Jim means to head home, but as is becoming more frequently the case, he instead finds himself pulling into the Byers' gravel driveway.

He wonders grimly what his story will be tonight, and it occurs to him that people can be particular about unexpected company around the holidays. Perhaps his presence, while usually welcome, might be seen as intrusive given the occasion. How should he explain himself: "Hey Joyce, I was just about to turn in for an evening of drunken despair, when I thought I'd stop by to wish you Merry Christmas." Honesty, in this case, probably wasn't the best policy.

Deciding he'd figure out something to say on the way in, Hopper cuts the engine and approaches the house, immediately sensing something unusual about the place. Loud noises are emanating from the typically funereal Byers' residence, sounds that, as he gets closer he identifies as music. Since no one will hear him knocking over the reverberation of Bowie at top volume, Jim tries the door and lets himself in.

Once inside, he can hear Joyce and the boys shouting along with the song. Hopper has been standing bewildered by the front door for some time when Joyce comes out of Jonathan's room still strutting and singing: "Hot tramp! I love you so!" She stops dead when she sees him, emitting a slight shriek. "Jesus, Hop, how long have you been out here!"

Seeing that her face is already reddening with embarrassment, Hopper suppresses his laughter, but just barely. Joyce is flustered in a way he has never seen before; for once, her dark eyes are lit up with excitement rather than anxiety. She is smiling shyly as she explains that Jonathan has been making Will these great mixed tapes and how they've been really bonding over music. Her eyes are darting everywhere, never meeting Hopper's steady gaze. At last she exhales, adding that she's always loved this song, and that they all "got kind of carried away."

While she speaks in the meandering way she has, she's doing that fluttery thing with her hands, a gesture which Hopper finds inexplicably disarming. Trying to maintain a casual demeanor, he assumes his preferred cop stance, hands on hips, eyebrows raised. "Last time I checked, Joyce," he drawls. "It was called 'having a good time.'"

The cassette player clicks to a stop, and Jonathan and Will appear in the hallway. The older boy gives Hopper a nod of acknowledgement,

but his little brother looks concerned, mistaking Jim's somewhat stricken expression for a sign of trouble: "Everything okay, sir?" In spite of his recent ordeal, Will's face has retained much of its wide-eyed innocence, warming and breaking Hopper's heart at the same time. Jim takes a deep, dramatic breath then says with a smirk, "Yep, everything's fine. Just investigating a noise complaint. Now that your mother has calmed down, I think I can safely call it a night." Will giggles, and Jonathan manages a small smile, but Joyce's laugh is most surprising, and now it's Hopper's turn to feel self-conscious.

Before an awkward silence can descend, Jonathan remarks that he and Will are going to listen to side two, and motions the younger boy back into the bedroom. Joyce heads to the kitchen, obviously in search of a cigarette, and Hopper follows her thinking that he could use one himself. They have been sitting at the table quietly smoking for mere minutes when Joyce jumps up from her chair and suggests some eggnog.

"I made it myself," she points out, filling their mugs. "Unfortunately, the mashed potatoes I made tonight had the same consistency." For the first time that night, she looks directly at him, and the warmth in her eyes catches him off guard.

With the hope of regaining his composure, Hopper takes a drink, and is pleased to discover that Joyce has not gone easy on the rum. "Well, I hope you don't mind me barging in on you like this, given that you've clearly been waiting a few months for tonight." His gaze wanders to the multi-coloured glow emanating from the living room. Joyce is puzzled for a moment, then catching onto the joke, she begins to chuckle. "I guess I did get into the Christmas spirit a little early this year, huh? I suppose that's why you came by tonight, just to make some stupid crack about the lights?"

"To be honest, Joyce," Jim sighed. "I'm not entirely sure why I came by. All I know is that it's good to hear you laugh."

"And sing, right?"

"Umm...sure."